

Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Overview, Statistics and their Benefits

Abstract. The article describes two types of bilingualism (early bilingualism and late bilingualism), gives information about how widespread bilingualism is in the USA and Europe and how it happened to appear there. There are also people who speak three (trilinguals), four (multilinguals), five and more (polyglots) languages. Besides the article presents some statistics on the number of people who speak one or more languages and gives the information about bilinguals in our country (Tatar, Chechen republics and others). It also shows the list of nine Russian words (toska, bytie) which have no equivalents in the English language so that only a bilingual can get the exact meaning. Research done by linguists and psychologists is described in the article shows the positive influence of bilingualism on the development of memory, logics and analytical abilities, states that the language bilinguals speak determines their memories and mentions the reasons for the choice.

Key words: bilingual, monolingual, trilingual, multilingual, research, development of memory, a way to express emotions.

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According to statistics about 43-45% of the whole population in the world is *bilingual*. They include migrants and their relatives, children from mixed marriages, citizens of countries where two languages are official, and other people. Bilingualism is the ability to use two language systems without confusing grammar, phonetics and vocabulary while switching from one language to the other [1, p. 176]. Due to wide migration, bilingual people could appear anywhere in the world. Bilingualism tend to be of two types: early bilingualism (where a child learns to speak two languages at the same time, from his birth) and late bilingualism (where a person already knows one (native language) and due to some circumstances moves to another surrounding where the dominant language is not his native language). Bilingual people prevail in the Hispanic community in the USA (where people speak both Spanish and English), in Canada (with two official languages: French and English), in Africa where in some countries people speak both French and the native language or both English and the

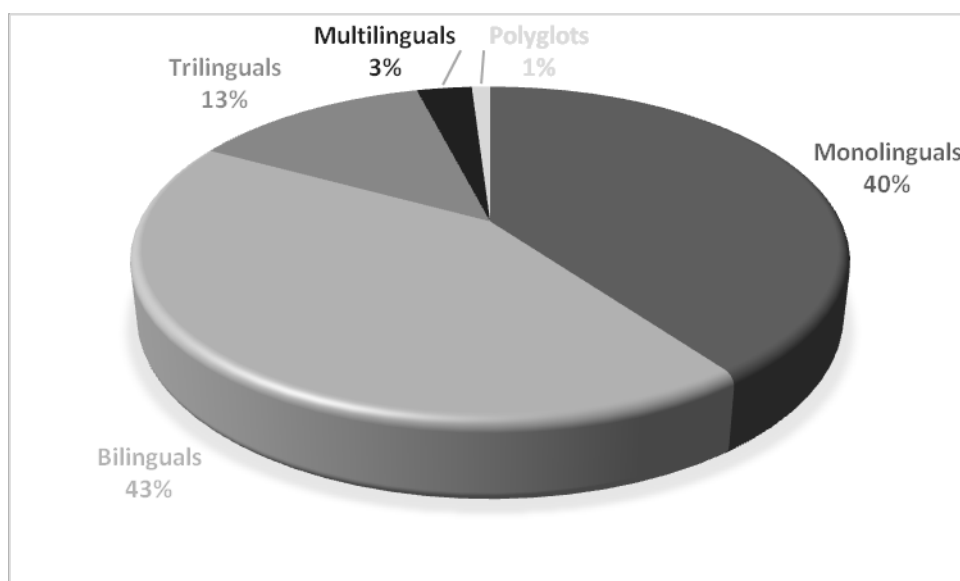
native language. In many countries in Europe people tend to be bilingual as many newspapers, magazines are in English and most Hollywood films are not dubbed into their native language so that they have no choice but learn English.

About 40% of people are *monolingual*, as they know only one native language. Statistics show that such people live mostly in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand since they are English-speaking countries and, as English is a world language, learning a foreign language is of little use.

About 13% are *trilingual*, it means that such people can speak three languages fluently. Such people live in Hong Kong where citizens speak Mandarin, Cantonese and English, in Norway (people know Norwegian, Swedish and English), in the Philippines (Tagalog, Spanish and English) and some other countries in the world.

Multilingual people contain about 3% of people in the world who can use more than four languages. And less than 1% of people in the world are *polyglots* and they speak about 5 languages. Most multilinguals and polyglots can be found in Switzerland with German, French, Italian and English languages, Morocco with Arabic, Moroccan, Spanish, French and English languages. In multilingual countries people can easily switch from one language into other languages and sometimes they may use multiple languages in the same conversation [2, p. 198].

Chart 1. The Percentage of People Speaking One and More Languages



Bilingualism and multilingualism give lots of benefits, such as better job opportunities, a cognitive boost, a brain training activity and even protection against dementia. People speaking different languages also see the world differently. Besides bilinguals have a great opportunity to read foreign literature, watch films in the original, as even the qualitative translation never gives the exact emotions the author wanted to express and often changes the nuances of the narration. So it is always an advantage to read and watch the works of art in the language they were created. Another benefit is the fact that some languages do not have the exact translation of some notions and one cannot express them in case they do not feel them.

The *Business Insider* provides the list of 9 Russian words with no equivalents in English. Let's consider some of them and note that only bilinguals (those who know both Russian and English) can feel the exact difference [4].

The first is «*тоска*» is usually translated as melancholy or some emotional pain the speaker is suffering from. But Russian people say these synonyms do not express its depth. Vladimir Nabokov describes it like that “No single word in English renders all the shades of *toska*. At its deepest and most painful, it is a sensation of great spiritual anguish, often without any specific cause. At less morbid levels it is a dull ache of the soul, a longing with nothing to long for, a sick pining, a vague restlessness, mental throes, yearning. In particular cases it may be the desire for somebody or something specific, nostalgia, love-sickness. At the lowest level it grades into ennui, boredom.”

Another is *бытие*, which is often translated in dictionaries as 'being' and 'existence', but Russians claim it to be a part of an objective and analytical mindset.

Беснредел is another word which has no exact equivalent in English. It can be translated as 'chaos', 'lawless actions' but literally it means 'without limits and boundaries'.

Each language has such a list of notions with no equivalents in other languages, so that only a bilingual (multilingual) person can fully understand their shades of meaning.

However, the notion of bilingualism used to be considered by public as something negative. Both scholars and parents were confident of the fact that two flows of information can mix up and impede their cognitive development.

There are several researches conducted on the influence of bilingualism on children's academic results. The first research which showed positive results of bilingualism was published in 1962. Alison Elizabeth Pill and Wallace Lambert made this experiment in Montreal, Canada, where they compared the academic results of bilingual children (who speak both English and French) and only French-speaking children. The objective of their study was to show that knowing two languages don't affect children in a negative way.

The target audience was children at the age of four, five and six, who were given easy cognitive tests to complete. All children without exception managed to get through the tests very quickly. This shows that there is not much difference in cognitive skills between bilinguals and monolinguals. It means that bilingualism doesn't harm people as people used to think.

There is some difference in monolingual and bilingual thinking due to specific processes connected with attention and selection. Bilinguals have a better developed ability to pay attention to more important information while being distracted by some factors.

A study from Lancaster University and Stockholm University, published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology, found that people who are bilingual think about time differently depending on the language context in which they are estimating the duration of events

Linguists Professor Panos Athanasopoulos and Professor Emanuel Bylund explained that bilinguals often go back and forth between their languages consciously and unconsciously.

Psychologists and educationalists differ greatly in their attitude towards the influence of bilingualism on the development of memory, logics and analytical abilities. The study of families with high income and good education showed that

bilinguals are quicker-minded than their monolingual peers. They showed better results in learning the third language and other subjects, e.g. programming. However, the results of such surveys of children in schools in poor migrant regions of the USA and Western Europe are totally different. They demonstrate intellectual gap between bilinguals and native citizens. Though it doesn't mean that in the future they will be less able to adapt to the changes in the modern world.

The language bilinguals speak determines their memories. They speak their first language when they talk about their homeland, and the second language when they describe their lives in a new country. However, if they need to talk about childhood using an acquired language, this process of speaking is going slower.

We may think that it is easier for bilinguals to express emotions in their first (native) language. But it is just a myth. The choice of the language of emotions is determined by different factors, e.g. parent-child relations and child's experience as the whole. If a grown-up bilingual has any negative events connected with his childhood and therefore his first (native) language, he tends to express his emotions in the second (acquired) language. Due to this fact – the chance to separate himself from the words he pronounced – many bilinguals mention that it is easier for them to express anger, swear and pronounce rude words using the second (acquired) language. It helps them avoid the sense of shame [3, p. 150].

Though other bilinguals argue that deep and true emotions are more often expressed in their first (native) language. As bilinguals in the UK tend to use 'I love you' here and there whereas they say about their real love to their nearest and dearest in their native language as it is something important.

As a whole there are no definite rules to express emotions when you speak several languages: some bilinguals tend to use their first native language, others use their second language, others successfully use both of them.

Bilingualism is not very widespread in Russia, but in some republics of the Russian Federation people speak the Russian language and the national language of the republic (e.g. Russian and Tatar in Tatarstan, Russian and Chechen in the

Chechen Republic, etc). Only about 4% of the whole Russian population speak English and it's very few. The Tatar language takes the third place which means that the percentage is even lower than 4. However, in some regions with multinational population bilingualism can be found. One of such reasons is Perm region, where the language situation is specific. There lived about 125 nationalities, among them there are Russian, Tatar, Komi, Ukrainian, German, Belorussian and others. Multinationalism determines the functioning of languages in the republics.

If we consider the Perm region, about 95% of the population speak Russian (it is more than 2515 thousand people), about 88 thousand speak the Tatar language, 7 thousand people know the Bashkir language whereas 59 thousand speak the Komi language.

Considering this information, we may come into conclusion that about 12% of the population of Perm region are bilingual (Komi and Tatar speakers who also know the Russian language).

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Билингвизм и мультилингвизм: общий обзор, статистика и их преимущества

Аннотация: В статье представлены описание двух типов билингвизма (ранний билингвизм и поздний билингвизм), информация о распространении билингвизма в США, в Европе, а также предпосылки его появления. Помимо билингвализма рассматриваются люди, владеющие тремя, четырьмя и более языками, которых называют мультилингвами и полиглотами, предоставляются статистические данные по количеству человек, владеющих одним или более языками, а также сведения о билингвах в республиках нашей стране (Татарская, Чеченская республики и т.д.) В статье приведены примеры девяти русских слов (тоска, бытие, и т.д.), которые не имеют полноценных эквивалентов в английском языке, которые бы полностью передали оттенки значений, поэтому полноценное их понимание доступно только билингвам. Кроме того, статья рассматривает исследования психологов и лингвистов, которые подчеркивают позитивное влияние билингвизма на развитие памяти, логики, аналитических способностей, а также дается информация о том, какой язык билингвы используют, рассказывая о своих воспоминаниях и почему.

Ключевые слова: билингвальный, монолингвальный, трехлингвальный, мультилингвальный, исследование, развитие памяти, способ выражения эмоций

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УДК 811.87

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Понимание лакунарных единиц испанского языка на примере произведения Г.Г. Маркеса «Похороны Великой Мамы»

Аннотация. В статье поднимается проблема перевода на русский язык лакунарных единиц испанского языка на примере произведения Г.Г. Маркеса «Похороны Великой Мамы» и их понимание различными возрастными группами русскоговорящего населения. Раскрываются понятия «лакуна» и «реалия». Происходит описание создания опросника, содержащего семнадцать тщательно отобранных лакунарных единиц испанского языка. Используется метод лингвистического прогнозирования. Детально описываются примеры понимания конкретных лакун в зависимости от возраста респондентов, а также